

Finally, on the issue of liability and immunity from liability, this has been one that has been raised by Senator MCCONNELL for months. He has basically said that nothing will move until he gets a provision, which I find objectionable, that was originally offered by Senator CORNYN.

Here is what it comes down to: Should people be able to go to court if they believe that they have been harmed or that members of their family have died as a result of the wrongdoing of people during this COVID-19 pandemic? Some argue that businesses should not have that possibility hanging over their heads, and that is what Senator CORNYN used as a basis for his provision, which makes it almost impossible for anyone to recover for any losses during COVID-19. Others believe that we need to show an even-handed approach to this on both sides: If we are going to be fair to businesses that are legitimately, in good faith, trying to protect their employees and customers, we should also leave the possibility open that those who are responsible for their actions need to be held accountable in court. I think it is a simple and basic provision that there be equity on both sides, not just for plaintiffs but also for defendants.

We tried mightily during the last several weeks, and I want to salute my colleagues who engaged directly in that effort: ANGUS KING, of Maine; TIM KAINE, of Virginia; CHRIS COONS, of Delaware; DICK BLUMENTHAL, of Connecticut; MAGGIE HASSAN, of New Hampshire. We offered a variety of options that we thought were reasonable and served the purpose of justice, but we couldn't reach an agreement.

The others on the Democratic side who were part of this overall effort deserve mention in the RECORD. I don't want to miss anyone, but I want to include, certainly, JOE MANCHIN, of West Virginia; MARK WARNER, of Virginia; and JEANNE SHAHEEN, of New Hampshire. To all of them, I thank them for bringing forth this measure.

Now it is going to be in the hands of leadership. I hope we can call it up this week. We should not go home without it.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

2020 ELECTIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, as the Republican leader rightly acknowledged a few moments ago, Joe Biden will be the next President of the United States, and our colleague KAMALA HARRIS will be the next Vice President of the United States. Leader MCCONNELL's Republican Senators ought to follow suit. They ought to acknowledge that Joe Biden will be the next President and that KAMALA HARRIS will be the next Vice President.

For the sake of the country, President Trump should take his cue from Leader MCCONNELL that it is time to end his term with a modicum of grace

and dignity—qualities that his predecessors took great pains to display during our grand tradition of a peaceful transfer of power.

Enough is enough. Our Republican colleagues, for the sake of our democracy and for the sake of the peaceful transition of power, should stop the shenanigans, stop the misrepresentations, and acknowledge that Joe Biden will be our next President. Enough is enough. Republican Senators and Republicans throughout the country should follow Leader MCCONNELL's lead and acknowledge now that Joe Biden will be the next President of the United States.

CORONAVIRUS

Madam President, now on COVID-19, in a year full of grim milestones, yesterday delivered the grimmest yet—that more than 300,000 Americans have now died from COVID-19. This is greater than the number of American soldiers who died during the entirety of World War II—a population the size of St. Louis or Pittsburgh wiped off the map—300,000 American souls.

As trucks bearing the first shipments of vaccines fan out across the Nation—the first best hope for defeating the pandemic in the new year—we cannot lose sight of what we have lost this year. That is what the end of 2020 has brought—hope tinged by grief. It was an amazing sight yesterday to see the first American being inoculated against the disease—a nurse at the Long Island Jewish Medical Center in Queens, my home State of New York—but for so many, the vaccine has not come soon enough.

Let it be our tribute to those Americans we lost to do everything in our power to limit the losses in moving forward—to produce and distribute as many vaccines as are necessary and encourage every American—every American—to take the vaccine when it is available to him. There are 3 million doses of the vaccine that are already out the door, and another vaccine is already in the emergency authorization process. Still another vaccine candidate may be ready early next year.

As I said yesterday, the discovery of the coronavirus vaccine in the span of a calendar year is a crowning scientific achievement of the 21st century. Our job now is to ensure that the good work of America's scientists, biochemists, and medical research is brought to bear and that, given the tools, we finally stamp out COVID-19 from our country and begin the road to recovery. We need to fully fund not only the production of the vaccine but its distribution as well. The States need that money.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, it was a hopeful day yesterday as the first COVID vaccines in the United States were distributed to healthcare workers on the frontlines of the COVID battle, and later this week, the FDA will hold a meeting on an emergency use authorization for Moderna's COVID vaccine, meaning that we could have a second coronavirus vaccine authorized before Christmas.

If all goes well, we expect to have 100 million Americans vaccinated by March. That is a pretty amazing statistic when you consider that just a year ago, we didn't even know about the virus, and it is a tribute to the innovative power of the private sector and the efforts of Congress and the Trump administration to expedite vaccine development. It has been a long, hard year, but the light at the end of the tunnel is coming.

But, while yesterday was an encouraging day, we have more work to do on the COVID front.

First, we all need to keep following the CDC's recommendations. The roll-out of Pfizer's vaccine is wonderful news, but cases in the United States are still surging. Until we can get a lot more people vaccinated, we need to do everything we can to slow the spread of the virus and avoid overwhelming our hospitals.

Second, we need to pass another COVID bill here in Congress to provide additional funding for vaccines and deliver other urgently needed relief to our fellow Americans. Republicans, of course, have been trying to pass additional COVID legislation literally for months, and I am encouraged that, in the past few weeks, a number of Democrats have stepped forward to work with the Republicans to develop bipartisan legislation. Just yesterday, a bipartisan group of Senators released legislation along the lines of what the majority leader has advocated—targeted relief that focuses on our most critical needs in the areas where Republicans and Democrats agree. This includes important COVID priorities like vaccine funding, money for schools, and help for the hardest hit small businesses.

The Republicans and Democrats' ideal COVID bills might look very different, but there are a number of things that all of us agree need to be addressed, and we should—in fact, we must—pass legislation to take care of those priorities. I am thinking about vaccine distribution especially. We have been blessed with not one but two viable vaccines, with more on the horizon. We can't afford to undermine this success by failing to provide the resources that are necessary for widespread distribution.

The ball is in the Senate Democratic leader and Speaker PELOSI's court. We have bipartisan support for targeted relief to address our most critical priorities. In fact, the Democratic leader in the House noted on Sunday:

I think we need to get an agreement, and we need to get this bill passed. . . . Nobody

ever gets everything they want. And . . . it's critically important that we deal with these very, very important objectives even if we don't get on either side everything we want.

That was from the Democratic leader in the House of Representatives.

Meanwhile, the Democratic whip on the Senate side was part of the bipartisan group who suggested dropping the most controversial aspects and focusing on those things on which we agree.

So the answer really lies with Speaker PELOSI and the Democratic leader here in the Senate. Are they going to heed the bipartisan calls to deliver critical coronavirus funding, or are they going to continue to block relief for Americans?

Around our country, Americans are struggling under the worst wave of the virus to date. They need more help. Above all, they need the vaccinations that will help bring this pandemic to an end. We can pass additional coronavirus relief legislation this week. To quote the majority leader, let's "get it done."

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BRAUN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM BARR

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, yesterday evening, President Trump shared the news that Attorney General Bill Barr will be leaving the administration in the coming days, and I want to take a moment to publicly thank the Attorney General for his service to our country.

Under two different Presidents and at two very different times in our country's history, Bill Barr gladly answered the call to service. His steadfast leadership has enabled the Department of Justice to continue its mission at a pivotal moment in our Nation's history.

I particularly appreciate Attorney General Barr's attempt to get to the bottom of some of the abuse of power by the FBI and the Department of Justice during the latter part of the Obama administration and early in the Trump administration.

During his time as Attorney General, Bill Barr has consistently fought to improve the safety of our communities across the country by attacking violent crime and aggressively countering transnational criminal organizations. He has been a champion of Project Safe Neighborhoods, which has strengthened community partnerships and helped to reduce crime rates across our country.

He has taken aim at the threats that exist beyond our borders, from drug cartels in Mexico to economic exploitation and outright theft by China.

Through it all, he has been as dogged in preventing injustice as in pursuing wrongdoing.

So I want to thank the Attorney General once again for not only answering the call to serve a second time but also for once again serving with distinction and integrity.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. President, on another matter, this week is set to be the final week for the 116th Congress, and the American people are counting on us to do our job. We have until this Friday to fund the government, and I hope we can pass legislation that provides more certainty than the stopgap bills that have become the norm in recent years.

It is simply impossible for government Agencies and Departments like the Defense Department to plan with short-term continuing resolutions. They need a longer term so they can plan and actually spend taxpayer dollars far more efficiently.

This is also a final opportunity to reach an agreement on another coronavirus bill, something that has been on our to-do list since this summer.

There is no reason why we shouldn't be able to send a stack of bipartisan bills to the President's desk for his signature. These may seem like small ball compared to some of the big issues like keeping the lights on for the government or another COVID-19 relief bill, but they are very important bipartisan pieces of legislation.

JENNA QUINN LAW

Mr. President, one of those bills is the Jenna Quinn Law, which I have spoken on here on the Senate floor many times. The goal of this legislation is straightforward—to stop child sexual abuse. It will help us do that by building on the success of what is now known as Jenna's Law in Texas and other States, which requires training for teachers, caregivers, and other adults who work with children, who will receive specialized training on how to detect and report and thus prevent child sexual abuse.

The signs of child sexual abuse are unique from other forms of child abuse and correctly identifying these signs is integral to bringing children out of sexually abusive situations. You might ask, If there is a Texas State law providing for this, why do we need a Federal law? Well, not every State has done what Texas has done, but also they need the funding to help pay for this specialized training. That is what the Jenna Quinn Law that is pending in Congress will do, and it will encourage other States without similar laws to implement innovative programs to address child sexual abuse. There should be few things more unifying than the war against child sexual abuse, which is why this bill passed the Senate unanimously earlier this year.

But days have turned into weeks and weeks have turned into months, and the House still hasn't passed the Jenna Quinn Law. It is not because House Members oppose the bill. If it came up on the floor today, nearly every Member of the House of Representatives would vote for it.

This bill hasn't been able to pass the House because one chairman—a Democratic chairman—won't even give the House a chance to vote on it. For months, Education and Labor Committee Chairman BOBBY SCOTT has refused to move the Jenna Quinn Law. Despite repeated requests from countless child advocacy groups and a bipartisan group of Senators and Congressmen, it continues in purgatory on the committee calendar.

Senators HASSAN, SMITH, and I sent a letter to Congressman SCOTT urging him to take action and to allow this lifesaving legislation to pass the House this year. He responded to our letter, saying he will continue to hold this legislation because he wants to add it to other more complicated legislative measures next year.

So when it comes to detecting and preventing child sexual abuse, Chairman SCOTT thinks we can wait until next year.

We can't wait until next year.

In short, he admitted that this legislation is so important and so valuable that he can't let it pass on its own. It has to drag other, more controversial, more partisan pieces of legislation along with it. And just when you think things can't get any worse, they do.

As I said, this legislation will provide funding to the States and will encourage States, like Congressman SCOTT's home State of Virginia, to implement it. You would think that Congressman SCOTT would care. If he didn't care for the bill that would benefit the rest of the country, you would think he would care about how it would benefit his constituents in his home district of Virginia. Virginia doesn't currently require this training for teachers, caregivers, and other adults who work with children, and this legislation would fix that.

Making this matter even more urgent is the pandemic. Experts believe that the unique conditions created by COVID-19 have caused instances of child sexual abuse to go up, while the number of reports has gone down. Families are experiencing a range of new stressors, including everything from job losses to financial instability, to health anxiety, all while isolating at home with their children. And the children who aren't going to school each day are out of sight from the teachers, busdrivers, and other adults they would otherwise come in contact with who are most likely to identify and report child sexual abuse. Adults who work with children are the No. 1 reporters of that abuse.

So there could not be a more urgent need for this legislation. This is not a partisan pet project. It is legislation that will save the lives of children across the country. Victims in my home State of Texas and Congressman SCOTT's home State of Virginia would experience the lifesaving benefits of the Jenna Quinn Law.

A couple weeks ago, the Dallas Morning News published an editorial titled,